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ABSTRACT

This paper presents an overview of the Equal Opportunities and Vocational Training program of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) from its inception in 1977 until 1990. In the first section, the report describes the legislation that spurred the equal opportunities and vocational training program and presents some comparative statistics showing the gains in women's employment for the years 1976-1988. The statistics show that in general, the percentage of women in employment increased from 2 to 12 percent for the various countries of the European Economic Community, although the unemployment rate among women remained higher than that of men in most of the countries. The second section of the report describes the new approaches in the field of vocational training developed by CEDEFOP. It shows that women and girls complete job training in "men's" fields as well as or better than men; however, few women have moved into such jobs. However, continuing training led to changes in activities and skills, positively changing women's attitudes to work and promoting a sense of corporate identity. The section provides a skills profile for equal opportunity counselors, describes training for women entrepreneurs, and describes programs for women in information technology and microelectronics. Finally, the section discusses the difficulty of evaluation of programs for women. In the third section, the report concludes that the vocational training program has been successful in opening up discussion and building bridges in the field of continuing training. Twenty footnotes conclude the report. (KC)

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CEDEFOP Document

Equal opportunities and vocational training

13 years on

The results of CEDEFOP's programme for women 1977-90

European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training

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Equal opportunities and vocational training — 13 years on
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Equal opportunities and vocational training

The results of CEDEFOP's programme for women 1977-1990

13 years on

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I. Introduction

The "Equal opportunities and vocational training" programme is nearly as old as CEDEFOP itself. In 1977, only two years after the creation of CEDEFOP, a seminar took place on this subject in the Berlin Reichstag at which the participants made concrete demands to CEDEFOP in the interests of women. Diversification of women's occupational choice, initial and further training for women in industrial and technical jobs and the upgrading of typical women's jobs by new training concepts played an important role in this context.

CEDEFOP's target group programme for women which emerged shortly after this conference must be seen against the background of the equal opportunities policy of the European Communities and the directives on this subject which had already been issued at the time.

1. Legislation and positive action

Successful and less successful initiatives of the EC Commission

Art. 119 of the EEC Treaties of 1957 stipulates that women and men should receive equal pay for equal work. However this idea of sexual equality, unusual in the context of the late 1950s, was not the reflection of an early emancipatory impulse on the part of the founding fathers of the EC, but rather an expression of concern about the situation with respect to competition in the Member States of the time. France had already enshrined the principle of equal pay in its legislation and was concerned that it would suffer a competitive disadvantage if the other EC Member States were not obliged to follow suit.

The principle of equal pay for equal work in Art. 119 EEC Treaty was to exist on paper alone until the year 1975 when the Council adopted a corresponding directive. Although binding for all Member States, its transposition into national law was left up to the individual states. A second directive on "the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions" (the "equal opportunities directive", in brief) followed in 1976. Both directives were to be transposed into national law by the Member States by 1976/1978 respectively. This, however, failed to occur. The implementation process was sluggish and incomplete. In 1980 the EC Commission noted in an analysis report that "e.g. the equal pay directive had not been transposed into national law by any state in a completely satisfactory manner.[1)] At the time the Commission attempted to launch proceedings against seven out of nine Member States for infringement of the Treaty.[2)]

CEDEFOP's work programme on "equal opportunities and vocational training" is closely linked to the second phase of the EC's equal opportunities policy, initiated by the Commission in the form of the first action programme in 1982. By this time the

conviction had been reached that a considerable number of the obstacles on the way towards the full application of equal opportunities were evidently not of a legal nature. These obstacles, in the opinion of the Commission, stemmed from the persistence of the traditional role perception of men and women.[3] Positive action, initiatives in the field of education, training and the job market, exclusively accessible to women, were to set signals, attitudes and behaviour were to be changed. Although governments of the Member States were the main ports of call, private and public sector employers were also called upon to develop action programmes to e.g. expand the spectrum of girls' occupational choice or to offer women access to future-oriented (men's) jobs. Apart from the criticism of women Members of the European Parliament of every political creed who described these actions as "a drop in the ocean", (women) job market researchers regarded the action programme as too superficial in its approach, and regretted that it was geared towards educating and informing the various players, as opposed to making the existing dominant mechanisms responsible for the lack of equal opportunities. [4]

2. European Statistics:

Not always helpful

The problem with European statistics is that they are not compiled according to the same methods in all the Member States and once they are published by EUROSTAT, they are often too stale to be able to reflect current trends. In the case of vocational training statistics, there is the further difficulty of drawing meaningful comparisons between the various vocational training systems. With reference to the question of women, the criticism has been voiced for many years that the figures are not all broken down according to sex.

Nevertheless, a glance at employment and social statistics with relevance to women permits a better appraisal of the different and similar developments in the Member States of the Community.

Employment and unemployment among women[5)]

	year	A	B	C	D	E	F
Belgium	1976	1.2	44	31.7		71.6	
	1988	1.5	52	38.8	6.8/17.1	71.6	25/95
FRG	1976	9.5	49.6	36.9			
	1988	10.6	51.9	39.1	5.3/8.1	72.5	3/60
Denmark	1976	1.0	63.5	37.7			
	1988	1.2	75.9	45.3	5.4/7.7	84.5	44/87
France	1976	8.0	51.0	35.1			
	1988	8.9	55.7	41.8	7.8/13.6	71	25/95
Greece	1976						
	1988	1.2	41.7	34	5.1/12.6	67.2	3/62
Spain	1976	3.5	32.4				
	1988	4.3	37.5	31	15.4/28.1		5/66
Ireland	1976	0.3	34.5				
	1988	0.3	38.5	29	16.7/19.3	67.6	1/52
Italy	1976	5.8	34.6				
	1988	7.2	43.4	33.1	8.2/19.7	89.1	5/88
Luxembourg	1976	0.04	38.3				
	1988	0.06	44.3	36	1.9/3.5	63.5	1/48
Netherlands	1976	1.3	31				
	1988	2.2	41.9	34.5	8.2/13.4	77	11/75
Portugal	1976	1.4	51.5				
	1988	1.8	57.4	42	4.1/ 8.4		4/25
United	1976	9.5	55.1	35.2			
Kingdom	1988	11.2	62.6	42.6	9.1/ 8.2	69.5	2/44

A: women in gainful employment (in millions);
B: percentage of women in employment;
C: labour force participation rate of women;
D: unemployment rate among men/women (%);
E: women's earnings as a percentage of men's;
F: provision of child care facilities for the various age groups (0-3: crèche, 3-6: kindergarten/nursery school) (%).

Approx. 16 million people were unemployed throughout the European Community in 1988, i.e. every tenth member of the labour force. With the exception of the United Kingdom, women have been more severely hit by unemployment than men for many years (1988: women: 13.3% men: 8%). Moreover, it is self-evident that unemployment statistics, which only cover unemployed persons actually registered, give no more than an incomplete picture of the real situation, especially with reference to women. Many women do not go to the job centre because they feel they have no chance of finding a job.

Although unemployment within the Community as a whole has fallen since 1984, in most countries women have not benefited from this situation. They nevertheless continue to penetrate in increasing numbers unto the job market partly because they tend to consider working plus family life as a natural life model, but also to a certain extent because of a greater financial need to go out to work than before (unemployment among men, increase in single-mother families).

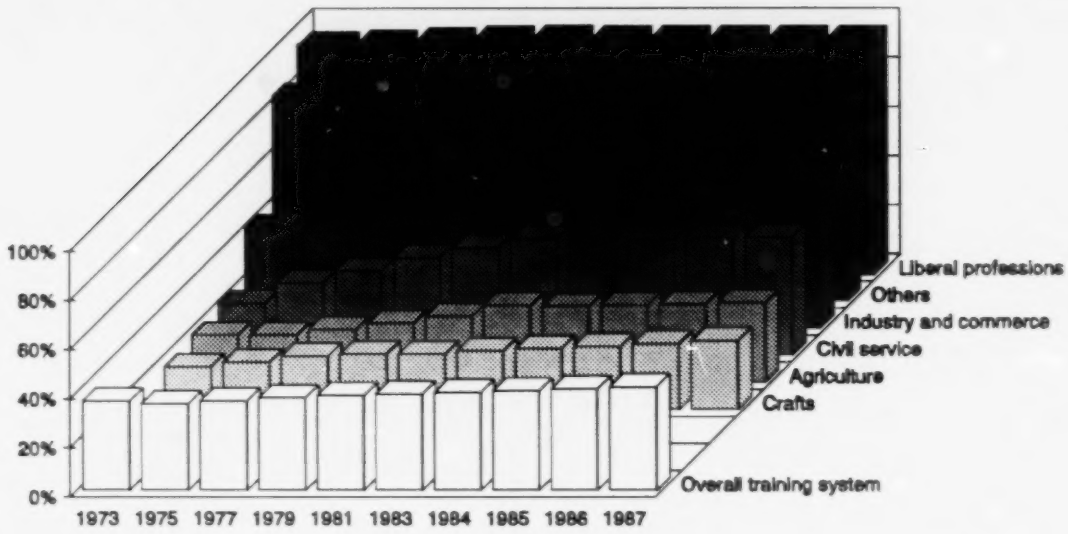
The high labour force participation among women is nevertheless often a shield hiding part-time and so-called precarious work situations, 90 % of which are held by women and therefore almost their exclusive domain. In countries in which there has been a particular increase in women going out to work (B, E, F, NL, UK), an upsurge in various forms of part-time work can also be observed.[6)]

With reference to general and vocational education, it can be stated that the situation for a number of years now has been such that there have never been so many well-educated young women in most Member States of the European Community. In the field of general education, girls are on a par with boys in nearly all Member States: the percentage of girls among secondary school leaving certificate passes following secondary level I and in the case of upper secondary school leaving certificates granting access to higher education corresponds to that of young men. In the field of higher education, the percentage of women students is approaching the 40 % mark. However most women are still to be found in "typical women's" disciplines, e.g. teaching, human and social sciences. Women students in natural science and technical disciplines in higher education are still few and far between.

A similar conclusion can be drawn for school-based and out-of-school vocational training. Although the participation of girls in vocational training has increased, approx. 80 % of women trainees are still concentrated in only 32 of approx. 300 possible occupations.[7)]

Two sets of statistics from the Federal Republic of Germany highlight this development:

The proportion of women among the trainees according to fields of training. 1973-87 (%) [8]



Year	Overall training system	Industry and commerce	Crafts	Agri-culture	Civil service	Liberal professions	Others
1973	36.4	41.1	17.4	19.4	21.1	93.4	83.5
1975	35.4	39.4	19.1	19.2	29.5	93.9	89.2
1977	36.5	40.4	21.7	21.6	34.6	94.9	87.4
1979	37.8	43.1	22.5	24.0	40.0	95.6	88.6
1981	38.6	43.4	22.5	27.0	44.0	95.8	88.1
1983	39.3	42.5	23.8	31.4	47.5	95.6	90.7
1984	39.9	43.0	24.7	31.0	47.7	95.7	90.7
1985	40.6	43.5	25.6	31.4	47.3	95.7	90.5
1986	41.3	43.6	26.7	31.9	47.7	95.6	91.2
1987	42.1	43.8	27.8	32.4	48.0	95.7	92.7

N.B.: Domestic service and shipping are included under "Others".

The ten most popular training occupations for male and female trainees in 1987 [9)]

Training occupation	Male trainees	% of all male trainees	Training occupation	Female trainees	% of all female trainees
	No.	%		No.	%
Car mechanic	77 134	7.7	Hairdresser	61 585	8.4
Electrician	48 332	4.8	Office clerk	49 639	6.8
Machinery fitter/ assembler	39 862	4.0	Sales assistant	49 681	6.8
Painter/Lacquerer	31 889	3.2	Specialized sales assistant in the food industry	48 591	6.6
Joiner	31 674	3.1	Clerk in industry	42 557	5.8
Clerk in the wholesale/ foreign trade	28 475	2.8	Doctor's assistant	35 035	4.8
Gas and water supply fitter	27 885	2.8	Clerk in retail trade	33 929	4.6
Bank clerk	27 205	2.7	Dental assistant	29 670	4.1
Clerk in industry	25 299	2.5	Bank clerk	28 989	4.0
Baker	24 684	2.5	Clerk in the wholesale/ foreign trade	22 248	3.0
Total	362 439	36.0	Total	401 824	54.9

II. CEDEFOP's activities

1. New approaches in the field of vocational training

Breaking out for new horizons

CEDEFOP conducted the first two programmes on the subject of equal opportunities and vocational training in the years 1978-1980. These programmes were concerned with the identification of innovative measures in the fields of guidance/motivation, initial vocational training, continuing training and vocational reintegration. The programmes were divided into three innovative criteria and evaluated.[10] These criteria were as follows: training of women for jobs in which they were under-represented to date (horizontal mobility) or for promotion to management positions (vertical mobility) and, finally, exemplary measures, motivating and training women who had previously not gone out to work for integration or reintegration into the job market.

In a second phase, CEDEFOP applied the first two innovative criteria to in-company training and the continuing training of women in the framework of case studies. [11]

It turned out that the programmes perceived as "innovative" were generally pilot schemes or projects. CEDEFOP's strategy was to pass on its findings to both the political decision-makers and theoreticians and practitioners of vocational training in the hope that these models would be able to influence mainstream vocational training systems in the interests of women in the future.

From the point of view of content, it became clear - and this can be considered as a truism today - that women and girls complete training in so-called typically men's jobs with equally good, if not better results than their male counterparts. The more certain framework conditions are fulfilled with specific reference to women, the better the results. An example of such measures in the framework of initial training in the industrial and technical sector are remedial courses to allow girls to catch up with gaps in their knowledge of mathematics and the natural sciences, offered either prior or in parallel to the actual training programme. In the case of training in the field of new technologies, (continuing training) programmes offered exclusively to women have proven their worth because the much alluded to reserve of women towards technology can be broached and tackled more easily in this context and the special access of women to technology given specific consideration. The analysed programmes offering training for women in managerial positions showed that apart from imparting technical skills, a psychological component is necessary (self-assertion training, rhetorics, the problem of working versus family life). Women returning to work, as experience from the projects on this specific target group showed, not only need to brush up obsolete skills and abilities. In this context an approach was successful which started out from the concrete situation of these women in mid-life and dealt with marital and family problems in the framework of a pastoral care approach, offering training on job application skills, etc. For adult women with children it became more than clear that adequate provision of child care facilities is just as decisive for the

success of the vocational training programme as for later reintegration into the job market. A further criterion of success, finally, was the financial security of the participants. If no maintenance was paid by the state or the job centres, there was a high risk of women dropping out of the programmes on account of the need to take on casual employment during their training to cover their costs of living.

Five years after the first study, CEDEFOP conducted a follow-up study to reevaluate the longer-term impact of the equal opportunity programmes.[12)]

Four criteria served as guidelines for this reevaluation:

I job integration corresponding to the level of training received, e.g. participants in the pilot project of the German government on the "training of women in industrial and technical occupations" finding jobs in occupational fields in which they were trained;

II vocational integration in a related occupation, e.g. women trained as painters in France finding jobs as specialized sales personnel in paint shops;

III better chances of finding a job, e.g. women trained in technical occupations in France returning to their old "pink-collar" jobs with better opportunities;

IV personal benefit for the participants, e.g. in all the participating countries in which reintegration programmes for women returning to work were implemented, the women themselves described how they had derived personal benefit from the programmes in terms of vocational orientation, self-awareness and the establishment of new contacts, which they consider as a success even if they did not subsequently manage to find a job; it should be noted in this context that many women use the programmes as a springboard towards further continuing training.

Five years on, the statistics relating to the participants in the innovative programmes remained far behind the expectations. Unemployment had increased again. Even if the women had found a job on the basis of their new qualifications, as the economic crisis reached a further head, they were the first to be made redundant. The German *Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung* (Institute for Vocational Training) nevertheless reported that the reintegration quotas of young women from the pilot programmes in the industrial and technical fields were no worse than women trained in typical pink-collar jobs.

The hope that a change might occur in mainstream education in favour of women as a result of an impetus from the pilot projects has also not been fulfilled. The conclusion of the final report in 1985 was that the time for experiments was over and that it was now up to policymakers to introduce positive action (introduction of quota systems in training and employment with specific dates and percentages as targets) to achieve equal opportunities for women.

The second programme on equal opportunities and vocational training was aimed at identifying such positive action, albeit measures implemented on a voluntary basis. The final report on the 27 in-company case studies notes that positive action was not only a question of initial and continuing training measures for the participating women, but also "training" and an important learning experience for the companies involved. The firms in question had decided to participate in these training programmes for future women managers for various reasons. At the level of recruitment and implementation, the women's specific (family-related) needs were taken into consideration and the curricula, intensity and duration of the programmes were drawn up accordingly. The experience of the firms was that if the appropriate conditions are offered, women can become new and important human resources for the company. Incentives were provided for changes in work organization with altogether favourable effects on productivity. Continuing training led to changes in activities and skills (continuing training of secretaries as assistants to the director), positively changing women's attitudes to work and promoting a sense of corporate identity.

2. The vocational profile and training needs of equal opportunity counsellors

All-round skills and patience

In 1984/85 CEDEFOP turned its attention in the field of research and the exchange of experience to a new occupation which had emerged in all Community Member States, held by women in 99 % of cases. The working spectrum of these women and the requirements in terms of their initial and continuing training were highlighted in a study and a subsequent conference on equal opportunity counsellors.[13] The women in these positions work as state equal opportunity counsellors at national, regional and municipal levels, serve as points of contact in individual cases of discrimination, and act as watchdogs over legislative processes, ensuring that the equality of the sexes enshrined in legislation is taken into consideration. They initiate research, training projects and publicity campaigns. The subjects they have to deal with range from sex-specific education in the family and at school through vocational education and the job market to the compatibility of family and working life and violence against women.

Public and private sector companies are increasingly creating equal opportunity counsellor posts. As the survey showed, they have sound entrepreneurial reasons for doing so: investment in the training and job familiarization of women should pay off. The activities of an equal opportunity counsellor may involve e.g. drawing up a model of "family-friendly" working hours so that mothers of small children will stay on with the firm, or organizing a targeted training programme for women at management level on the basis of her awareness of women's specific skills in the field of personnel administration. Moreover, the firms are increasingly realizing how important it is to have the reputation of being a "woman-friendly" company.

In some Member States, equal opportunity counsellors are also entering political parties, trade unions and associations; they ensure that the principle of equal opportunities is not neglected in schools and other educational institutions.

What all these equal opportunity counsellors have in common is that apart from self-assertion, endless patience and sensitivity, their job calls for an enormous range of skills which can only be acquired by sound initial training and ongoing continuing training. Since, as the study shows, many equal opportunity counsellors have studied social sciences at university, there is a need for additional qualifications in law, economics and politics. Permanent information on the development of the job market for women is just as indispensable as the acquisition of knowledge of new technologies. There is also a demand for training in conducting effective PR work, management, communication and coordination skills.

Various Member States have picked up a number of the ideas from this CEDEFOP programme and established initial and continuing training programmes for equal opportunity counsellors (F, E, D). The European Social Fund provides part of the funding of such programmes.

3. Continuing training for women establishing their own businesses

"Do it herself"

A new phenomenon appeared on the women's labour market in the mid-1980s: an increase in the number of companies established by women all over the Community, e.g. in the Federal Republic of Germany every fourth, and in the Netherlands every fifth new business was set up by a woman. A study published by CEDEFOP in 1986 highlighted the many different motives of women business creators and their starting-out positions.[14)]

The study showed that as well as entrepreneurs who had inherited their businesses from their fathers or husbands, a major proportion of the creators were women with a high level of training and a long working life behind them who had decided at a given stage in their career that they should like to stand on their own two feet and that to stay on with their previous employers would offer them no further career prospects. The second major group of women who decided to enter self-employment at this time was composed of jobless women who dared to take the plunge into self-employment. The starting chances of this second group were clearly much worse than those of the first group. Unlike the former group, the previously unemployed business creators encountered an endless series of obstacles and manifestations of discrimination among their business partners - they were faced with barriers in finding access to credit and the reaction of the public administrations, the chambers, suppliers and even their potential clients ranged from scepticism to discouragement.

In general it can be stated that most women's businesses are set up in the services sector and are small to very small businesses (little boutiques, restaurants, hairdressing and cosmetic salons, fashion, tourism). Business creations in typical growth sectors such as high tech tend to be an exception.

Against this background, the CEDEFOP survey and a conference held in 1987 in conjunction with the EC Commission and the French *Délégation à la condition féminine* examined three key questions: initial and continuing training for (women) business creators, funding in this context and promotion structures for women's businesses.

In the case of initial and continuing training, it transpired that programmes in this field must endeavour to impart behavioural patterns to women which run counter to typical female socialization. Instead of being reserved and adaptable, women should be coached in self-assertion and be encouraged to take risks. Clarification of the conflict which arises for many women creators with their previous life planning and dual role as both a member of the workforce and a housewife and mother is equally important. These women have to learn to cope with the prejudices of their environment and being branded as bad mothers neglecting their children because of their businesses. For this reason, preparatory training programmes for this target group must not only include specialized skills and personality reinforcement, but should also comprise concrete assistance for child care and help women divide up their time to reconcile vocational and family duties - a curriculum not normally found in the case of business creation programmes geared towards both sexes.

The study showed that women are in any case loath to accept conventional programmes. This applies above all to the group of women who set up their small businesses starting out from unemployment. Specific women's business creation programmes have gained considerable momentum in all Member States.

The basic principle running through all these alternative schemes is that they should start out from the women's present situation, i.e. the skills and aptitudes they already have. A glance at the surveyed programmes shows how varied this starting position may be: professional social welfare recipients with meagre educational and vocational qualifications may use their sewing, cooking, washing or ironing skills to set up service businesses in this field. Unemployed women with a degree of higher education may familiarize themselves with the use of computers in small-scale businesses and set up a consultancy firm for small and medium-sized enterprises, business management skills thus being combined to the acquisition of specific job-related skills.

However since these projects are unable to cover the demand from potential women business creators, the strategies developed by CEDEFOP and the conference also include awareness-raising and continuing training at the level of the players in mainstream programmes.

The surveys also showed that existing programmes are essentially provided for women living in urban areas and that there is a great disparity between structures offered in the larger towns and the provision in rural areas. It also became clear that the programmes - whether alternative or classical - often end at the point of business creation. There is nevertheless an immense demand for continuing training in the first few years following the business set-up. If the business is to be a success, research must be conducted on the relevant product or service's real market prospects. The potential creator must be trained in personnel recruitment and management skills, delegation of responsibility and in weighing up the advisability of further investment.

The seed-capital of women's businesses generally leaves much to be desired. This is not only due to discrimination on the part of the banks which tend to discourage rather than encourage women. The CEDEFOP study also showed that many women entrepreneurs tend to finance their business projects themselves, drawing on their own savings or capital borrowed from friends or relatives rather than asking the bank for a loan. Information and awareness-raising measures are necessary at this level to convince both the banks and the women in this respect.

Business creation programmes offered by the job centres in a number of Member States (F, P, UK) show a high number of female participants. In the context of these programmes unemployment benefit is either converted into capital as a business creation loan or it continues to be paid during the running-in phase of the business. Both types of programme are combined with training. Discriminatory structures can even be found with this form of promotion. If married women whose husbands have an adequate income are not eligible for unemployment benefit, they are not accepted for such programmes. The survey showed that women entrepreneurs who participated in these programmes had less success with their initiatives than their male counterparts.

Researchers moreover advise against setting up exclusively women's programmes (feminist financing funds); their argument is that these programmes tend to over-isolate women from the "normal" business world. Moreover, women who do not operate in conjunction with a bank miss an opportunity of professionalization since apart from loans, banks also offer counselling on financial planning, marketing, advertising, etc.

One of the conclusions of the final report was that in order to guarantee the effective promotion of women's business plans, guidance should be offered to women from the stage of the business plan to the actual consolidation of the business. Precisely this approach is already applied by the network which is in the process of establishment in the framework of the European Community action programme for local employment initiatives. Sponsorships (an experienced woman entrepreneur taking a business creator under her wing for some time), organized by associations of women entrepreneurs in various Member States, also aim in this direction. The report contains further vivid examples of this kind [DK: weekend information forums at which all the practitioners of importance to potential women creators are present.

D: the **Ökobank** intends to issue special saving certificates, the proceeds of which are exclusively earmarked to finance the start-up of women's enterprises. F: an equipment pool (ranging from a sewing machine to a computer) made available to newly established women's enterprises; the women may use the equipment on loan for six months and if their enterprise proves successful, the equipment may be purchased by instalment.]

4. Vocational training for women in information technology and microelectronics

The technological challenge

Since the early 1980s, the CEDEFOP equal opportunities and vocational training programme has been intensively involved with the so-called technological revolution, its impact on the job market for women and the resulting consequences for the initial and continuing training of women. The studies conducted scrutinized measures implemented by both educational institutions in the public sector and the firms. At a very early stage, an attempt was made to examine initial and continuing training projects especially designed for women with a specifically women's educational/training approach.

a) Projects as experimental fields

In 1985 CEDEFOP examined the experience of 15 projects in this field in the Member States of the Community.[15] A glance at the list of projects in the EG network, IRIS, which links up women's initial and continuing training initiatives across the Community, shows that the number of programmes in this field has already multiplied tenfold. Public and private sector educational/training institutions seem to have realized that precisely women have to face the technological challenge if their disadvantages on the job market are not to be perpetuated. This message has also filtered through to the women, as shown by the fact that the demand for such courses is much higher than the supply.

CEDEFOP's decision to become involved in this field is based on the fact that women are affected by the negative impact of the introduction of new technologies to a greater degree than men. Far more women's than men's jobs, both in the office and on the shop floor, have been subject to or are in the process of "rationalization" or deskilling. Access to modern jobs related to information and communication technologies is also more difficult for young women with sound educational qualifications than for their male counterparts due to the fact that girls still tend to predominantly opt for typically feminine subjects such as languages or history. Only very few girls choose mathematics or sciences as their elective subjects at school.

There was therefore a particular interest in the experience of educational/training projects seeking to overcome the much discussed reserve of women towards technology by surmounting the barriers in this field. Since mainstream vocational

training systems were at the time reluctant to introduce the use of new technologies, a subject which is only very gradually percolating through to training regulations, pilot projects with the character of experimental fields are highly illuminating as far as future strategies are concerned.

The 15 programmes examined, partly co-financed by the European Social Fund, can be divided into three categories: the first aimed at reducing participants' fears of and reserve towards new technologies and to impart basic knowledge in this field. At the same time, information was to be offered on relevant training opportunities and the participants motivated in this direction. A second category focused on office automation, with courses for women returning to work and unemployed women who had already acquired an office qualification prior to their voluntary or involuntary interruption of employment playing a particular role in this context. The third group, finally, offered training to women in technical and industrial jobs, aiming at skilled worker or technician level.

The target group consisted of women of all age groups with very different educational and vocational qualifications. It was nevertheless very clear that these initiatives also constituted an effort to promote particularly disadvantaged groups (ethnic minorities, un-/semi-skilled women, single mothers, long-term unemployed). It transpired that this group can much more easily be reached by independent projects, organized by trade union women's groups or the feminist movement, than by programmes in the context of mainstream educational/training institutions.

All the programmes attempted to closely combine theory and practice. Although the actual aim was to achieve a subjective process of theory formation via personal, sensory perception at the computer or in the laboratory, it nevertheless became evident that pure "instruction phases" with formal classroom teaching/training could not be avoided. The principle of exclusively women teachers/ trainers was not applied across the board. The rule of thumb was that the more official the institution, the more male teachers and trainers there tended to be. The traditional role distribution - men teaching technology, women the social sciences - runs counter to the strategy of exclusively women's projects, whereby identification with a woman trainer in a previously male domain is an important learning motivation and encouragement for women participants. A common denominator to all the programmes was a social policy component, including the history of technology and technology impact assessment. Pastoral care approaches based on the specific life situation of the participants were above all to be found in the programmes for disadvantaged women.

Most participants had registered for the courses because they were urgently seeking employment and expected to improve their prospects on the job market with their new skills. Self-realization and the substitution of housework by continuing training or better career prospects played virtually no role whatsoever. Success, i.e. completion of the programme with a certificate, was often dependent on funding modalities. The success rate was the highest when participation in the programme was not only free of charge, but financial assistance, teaching material and travel costs were covered and child care was guaranteed.

In particular the programmes at skilled worker and technician level (UK, I) led to nationally recognized qualifications. The other programmes issued certificates indicating the learning contents of the courses and attesting successful participation in the programme to a potential employer. The CEDEFOP report nevertheless emphasizes that such certificates are gaining increasing importance on the job market since, as already mentioned, new technologies have not yet sufficiently filtered through to existing official training regulations.

b) Company initiatives

A whole string of CEDEFOP surveys has been devoted to the impact of new office technologies on vocational training in the course of recent years. The personnel policy of large-scale service companies have been examined and unions and employees of both sexes surveyed in five Member States of the European Community.[16] The companies concerned were enterprises attempting to apply a forward-looking approach to personnel management and to ensure the career advancement of all their personnel groups. In 1988 CEDEFOP conducted a comparative analysis of the results of these 17 case studies.[17] This study outlines the history of office automation in its three main phases as background information:

The 1960s were characterized by the processing of vast quantities of data (principally figures) by centralized processing departments on mainframe computers. Taylorized jobs emerged in typing pools, filing departments and telephone exchanges while a reduction of the workforce took place at the lower level of a vocational group. Training of lesser skilled workers for routine jobs (data typist) as auxiliary service sector workers.

The increasing economic crisis of the 1970s brought a keener interest in rationalization and productivity growth in its wake. Partial elimination of centralized data processing. The PC begins to penetrate into specialized departments. Word processing takes place in the secretary's office, skilled employees process data in the framework of their job functions (persons working behind the counter in banks). Although information technologies continue to play a predominant role, the users increasingly learn to handle the new technologies at their workplace. Decline in data processing as the activity of auxiliary workers. Emergence of the problem of the retraining of the lesser skilled, principally women.

The 1980s were characterized by the search for a balance between existing innovatory potential (integration of the various functions: processing of figures, word and image processing, transmission, data storage, information systems, networks, data bases) and maximal cost-effective operation. The economic crisis comes to a head. More and more groups of workers are affected by the introduction of new technologies. Despite regional and national variations, the study comes to the conclusion that office automation has become widespread. The forerunners in this field are the finance sector and industry - above all particularly strong economic sectors such as energy producers - and commerce and distribution. Small and medium-sized companies are unexpectedly well fitted out with these new technolo-

gies. Public administrations may also be particularly well equipped, depending on the country and the specific field in question.

The final comparative study which concentrates on this final phase not only pinpoints vocational groups affected by new technologies, but also elaborates a new definition of occupations, primarily based on the possibility of access to information processing and the degree of expertise in information technology and the field of application, as well as in the field of inter-personal relations and communication.

In general terms it can be observed that the use of new technologies erases the dividing lines between office jobs and jobs in other sectors. Examples are jobs at the interfaces between administration and production (production management) or activities in the service sector (planning and management in the case of transport companies, hotel and travel bookings). However, administrative tasks for the purposes of data processing are increasingly being transferred to those jobs which traditionally called for technical or manual skills. This applies to stock issue in workshops and stock-keeping in supermarkets.

The report concludes with the hypothesis that this development could promote inter-occupational mobility. What does this imply for the firms and continuing training needs? There are, after all, companies which have realized that, e.g., there has been a fundamental change in activities in store administration so that the possibility of the transfer of relevant staff to the administration requires examination.

The report studies such gradual changes for a group of persons (managers are not included) who previously worked in traditional office jobs - and naturally this group is characterized by a particularly high proportion of women. It is becoming clear for this group that their chances of employment are being reduced by a slow-down in the growth of office services and even net job losses. Jobs at the bottom rung of the skills ladder are most severely hit. The labour force participation of women nevertheless continues to rise, as well as negative working conditions (unprotected employment). The qualitative development of skilled jobs cannot be distinguished from shifts in activity which erase traditional demarcation lines and therefore eliminate career patterns. Thus, e.g., the job profile of a counter assistant working in a bank is shifting towards commercial activities and customer servicing. Secretaries now deal with administrative and commercial tasks alongside their original typical work. Ideally, this helps them take a leap forward in their careers and they become assistants to the manager. Jobs in typing pools are becoming specialized in the compilation and processing of data, offered as a service to the various specialized departments.

New jobs are emerging to ensure adaptation of the relevant technology to the needs of the user (customer counselling and servicing, instructors, coordinators between EDP and specialized departments, etc.). The function of company management is also changing, control functions being replaced by leadership and back-up skills.

The report presents company strategies in the field of the organization and management of human resources against the background of all this information. Fundamentally it can be stated that new information technologies are extending the possibilities of work organization (centralization or decentralization, shifting operations from the company to skilled or unskilled outwork, satellite offices, etc.), especially with reference to a changed economic environment. Personnel administration is gaining increasing importance in this context. Does it opt for recourse to existing personnel and corresponding continuing training programmes or does it acquire the necessary know-how by recruiting new employees from outside? Does it limit its continuing training activities to updating training or is upgrading training also offered? Does the company invest in the potential skills of its workforce? The objective of training is no longer to adapt workers to the present demands of certain jobs in a company; it is becoming an indispensable investment if companies want to work in a forward-looking way, reacting swiftly to change.

This point makes it clear that vocational training in the field of new technologies cannot be restricted to merely introducing the participants to the machines and their operation. Vocational activity is increasingly gaining more differentiated elements. As well as specialized/ technical components (field of operation, equipment), communication is playing an increasing role in an environment which comprises management skills, a sense of precision, creativity and also critical behaviour. All these aspects are part and parcel of the field of learning which must be covered.

Initial and continuing training for the so-called new jobs related to new technologies (facilitators, instructors, coordinators between EDP and specialized departments, etc.) as sponsors/implementors of this change are of major importance.

Equally important, as emphasized by the report, is the realization that daily practice must be used as a learning resource to meet the new challenges.

Decisions with respect to work organization must always consider their impact on the human factor, e.g. traditional vocational career structures must be examined to determine their potential for the development of new skills. The recruitment criteria applied show that greater store is laid by overall vocational fields than on specific jobs.

The pace of change is also calling the relationship between initial training and the world of work into question. An exchange is developing between the firms and educational/training institutions, whereby the latter often receive information from the firms and update their expertise. The firms must constantly adjust the performance of their workforce to new demands and organize their own continuing training programmes. In some cases they also believe that such programmes are necessary to compensate for deficits at the level of the educational/training system. Overall it can be stated that the complementarity between educational/training providers (the state, the firms, private institutions) increases with the importance of continuing training.

The report finally emphasizes the risk of initial and continuing training becoming too closely related to the procurement of economic profit. Learning processes at a human pace are called for. Methodology is of particular interest in this context. It is also important not to lose sight of long-term investment in human resources.

5. Evaluation policy as an object of study

What can we learn from all this?

In conjunction with the EC Commission, CEDEFOP began with the evaluation of vocational training programmes for women in 1988. The basis for this evaluation was a questionnaire survey in almost all the Member States. The persons responsible for vocational training were asked about their practice of assessing such measures. In parallel, a study was initiated on the assessment of in-company vocational training (case studies). Vocational training programmes in the framework of regional development are also to be evaluated, again in the context of case studies.[18)]

The focus of interest in all three actions lies on changes in terms of improvement and development of vocational training. This approach is multidimensional in concept, i.e. the results of the analysis upon which the experimental sciences are established are not sufficient to record the entire reality. For this reason, CEDEFOP's partners in this activity are not only vocational training researchers, but also practitioners at this level. This cooperation is to lead to the elaboration of criteria for the effectiveness of measures in favour of women as well as criteria for economic effects. Moreover, tests are to be conducted on whether the evaluation methods used are commensurate with the relevant situation. At the end of this operation, CEDEFOP hopes to draw up a catalogue of criteria permitting the presentation of recommendable programmes which deserve funding and constitute a model of good practice.

The questionnaire survey showed that the results of vocational training programmes are generally furnished by the programmes to the sponsoring or funding body, it being assumed that the well-documented reports are not sufficiently evaluated and appreciated by these bodies. This exercise would however be meaningful and important to be able to assess the effects of pilot projects which, after all, serve to sound out the possibilities of progress and are of strategic importance since they are to lead to a different, better practice and influence political decisions in this field.

Those entrusted with the evaluation process do so with different interests in mind. Vocational training projects for women which often have no permanent source of funding and work as hard as they can without a permanent contract of employment are literally forced to send out success signals to their financial sponsors. Of course the participants also evaluate the measures. As far as the latter are concerned, success is perceived if they are awarded a certificate at the end of the programme which will improve their prospects with potential employers. This piece of paper, however, only covers part of the evaluation process. It has meanwhile become a truism that one of the most important advantages of these programmes is the fact that they promote these women's self-awareness and their social and creative skills.

A further question examined by CEDEFOP in this context is the evaluating body. Various models have been brought to light in this context. Large-scale institutions, e.g. the International Labour Office (ILO) or manpower services at national level declare themselves responsible in this field and create a specific department, administrative unit or working party to deal with questions of evaluation. This prevents unnecessary duplication of effort, saves time and money and improves the chances for swift changes in future contents, strategies and methods.

Another form of practice is to commission an outside agency, e.g. a research institute, with the evaluation of vocational training programmes. External evaluation would seem to provide a greater degree of objectivity. However in actual fact this is not automatically the case since the formal and informal relations between the training institutes, sponsors and evaluators certainly leave their mark on their approach to evaluation.

A further aspect is as follows: what is the effect of the commitment and subjectivity of the evaluators for the question of the target group on their work? This makes the profile of this activity - which comprises both precise specialized knowledge of vocational training and the job market for women and interaction with the multiple players in this context - extremely complex. The authors of the questionnaire evaluation have stated that a high degree of objectivity is required to draw up a summary of the subjectivity of all (those concerned) and their conclusion is that the evaluators themselves require training.

Activity on the question of evaluation naturally also involves the question of equal opportunities and the aims of the programmes operating under this label. In this context it became clear how different the intentions were. The pilot project on the training of girls in industrial and technical jobs in the Federal Republic of Germany was initiated under completely different auspices than comparable programmes in France. In the Federal Republic of Germany, the frame of reference was the enormous rate of youth unemployment, hitting girls more severely than boys. Moreover, the fact that training places were still available in the industrial and technical field also played a role, as presumably did the demands of the women's movement for equal opportunities in all jobs. An additional factor was that a deficit of skilled workers was also forecast at the time. It was therefore in the interests of the firms to provide training resources for the future. In France, in contrast, where the government was attempting to implement the EC equal opportunities directives, the firms had a different reaction. Instead of investing in initial training, they offered continuing training and retraining programmes for their women employees, at the same time keeping abreast of the process of economic restructuring.

These different starting positions and their possible effects on the subsequent measures have never been subject to adequate analysis.

As already mentioned, present evaluations are conducted by the training institutions themselves. As a rule, the results achieved at the end of the training programmes are compared to the original objectives. Institutions and trainers thereby constantly have

the specific situation of women in mind: are existing obstacles to certain jobs eliminated by the programme? Is the double day of women as employees and mothers/housewives taken into consideration? Are future employers made aware of this problem?, etc.

Fundamentally, three target categories can be differentiated: those promoting employment, those promoting the development of the participants' personality and finally those related to the institutional framework of training.

The diagnosis "mission accomplished" is concluded in the first case if, apart from the acquisition of skills, the participants have also learned to take the initiative and to understand and solve job-related problems and have naturally also achieved successful integration on the job market. For the second target category, self-confidence, communication and cooperation skills and self-assertion are the objectives. In the third category, the yardstick is constituted by the certificates and qualifications awarded, as well as access to further training and continuing training opportunities.

To fully elucidate the evaluation problem with respect to women, CEDEFOP is also extremely interested in the conclusion of the firms. It would also like to examine the evaluation of training for women in relation to training for all activities in the field of vocational training. Finally, women's programmes have in most cases been pilot projects, whose results and conclusions can only be understood in their full significance if they are compared to evaluations of mainstream training programmes.

III. Conclusion

Alongside the numerous publications on the various programmes of value both to vocational training practitioners and political decision-makers, CEDEFOP has in recent years always ensured that its findings have been disseminated among the public at large. For example, brochures to inform and motivate young women have been drawn up on the subject of access to industrial and technical occupations. Moreover, key players such as job placement officers and guidance counsellors have been made aware of this problem at special events.

Since each programme has been accompanied by a series of working meetings and final conferences, CEDEFOP has also made a contribution to the formation of a network between the initiators and organizers in the field of initial and continuing training, competent persons in the respective national and EC authorities and committed women in the political decision-making bodies. To this extent, the equal opportunities and vocational training programme is a good example of CEDEFOP's role as a European platform for the exchange of ideas and experience.

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1986: Council Directive on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women in occupational social security schemes;
1986: Council Directive on the application of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity, including agriculture, in a self-employed capacity, and on the protection of women during pregnancy and motherhood.
With a view to the completion of the Single European Market, a new women's action programme entitled NOW was initiated in the summer of 1990. This programme concentrates on vocational training and equal opportunities on the job market, whereby the creation of indispensable framework conditions such as, e.g., child care facilities is to be promoted;

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The results of CEDEFOP's programme for women 1977-90

Suzanne Seeland

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